

Free School Books

You Can Have Them Without Additional Cost by Voting in April.

It is only a month until the annual school meetings, and the Kicker desires to inform its readers how the patrons of a school district may obtain free books without additional cost to them. For some reason there seems to be a desire to keep from the people—the great mass of people—the things they ought to know.

If you want to save the money you now pay for school books, all you have to do is to say so at your April school meeting. You will not have to pay any additional tax. The money comes from the foreign insurance fund.

Perhaps you have heard of this fund before. The powers that were in Scott county allowed this fund to accumulate until it reached some \$17,000. The powers did not seem to know what to do with it—except to let it pile up in "our" bank and pocket the interest.

Even after the gouge was discovered, the then county commissioners refused to pay it over to the different municipalities to which it belonged until these municipalities agreed to divide up with the lawyers—in some instances giving them as much as half.

Those were glorious days for the grand old Democratic party of Scott county.

Finally they paid the principal, but W. H. Hutton, on behalf of Commerce, insisted on the interest, and the matter got into circuit court. Judge Kelly held that the interest had been honestly applied—just another honest mistake—and Mr. Hutton appealed the case. What will become of it, now that Mr. Hutton is no longer here to push it, I do not know.

But let us return to the free books. There are hundreds of families in Scott county who can ill afford to buy school books for their children—and it is the poor who generally have the greatest number of children. The cost of books, together with the cost of suitable clothing, keeps many a child from school.

It is the duty of society—the state—to see that no child grows up in ignorance. But the state is performing this duty as it performs all other duties toward the weaker ones. We have a compulsory school law, but nobody pays any attention to it. Free books is the entering wedge—a recognition of the duty that society owes to the child. When this idea is developed it will include clothing and wholesome food.

Millions of children are not in school because their parents are too poor to provide books and clothing. And other millions go to school hungry and with clothes that cause them to feel humiliated among the better dressed children. So let's begin on the books. I have before me a pamphlet which makes the method of adopting free books very clear, and from which I will quote:

Question—What is the Free Textbook Law?

Answer—The "Crossley-Or" Free Textbook Law was enacted by the 1913 General Assembly. It provides that school districts which furnish free to the children in the elementary grades all textbooks necessary for their use shall be entitled to a certain part of the Foreign Insurance fund.

Q—Where does this money come from, and what is the amount of it?

A—The Foreign Life and Life Insurance Companies doing business in Missouri pay as a tax to the state 2 per cent of all premiums collected on insurance policies. One-half of the total amount of this tax is apportioned to the several counties. The number of school children of school age in the county is the basis used to determine how much money each county gets.

The annual apportionment of this insurance tax by the state is from \$300,000 to \$325,000. An average county receives about \$25,000 a year.

Q—Does this money now go to the school districts?

A—It does not. The County Court apportions to each city and town the amount it is entitled to as based on the number of children of school age; the remainder of the money goes into the general fund of the county. The "Crossley-Or" Free Textbook Law makes this money available for the purpose of furnishing books for the free use of pupils in rural and city schools.

Q—How may a school district get this money to buy school books?

A—The School Board must submit to the voters the question "Shall free textbooks be supplied to the pupils in the school district Number.....?"

The question may be submitted at any annual meeting, or at a special meeting called by the board, fifteen days notice having been given in the usual way by the board.

The majority of the voters voting at such an election decides the question "for" or "against."

Q—What must the School Board do after a majority of the voters vote for free books?

A—The Board must select and purchase the textbooks necessary to supply the first four grades. The books are to be paid for from the incidental fund, the amount to be replaced by the Insurance Tax money when it is received. The Secretary of Board must then certify to the County Court that they are furnishing the first four grades with textbooks for the free use of the children.

The County Court must then apportion to that district its amount of the Insurance Tax money when the fund is received from the State Treasurer. This money is sent to the district in December.

The next year the Board supplies the fifth and sixth grades with textbooks and pay for them from the incidental fund, replacing the amount from the Insurance Tax money in December.

The third year the Board supplies the seventh and eighth grades with books in the same way. The Secretary then certifies to the County Court that all eight grades have been supplied with free books.

The County Court must continue to make the annual apportionment of the insurance tax money to that district thereafter.

This establishes a permanent book fund.

Q—Can this money be used for any other purpose?

A—It can not. It becomes a permanent fund for the purchase of textbooks by the district.

THINK THIS OVER

People cannot understand present-day religion until they understand "the church." They cannot understand "the church" unless they understand the capitalist system. That is why they who are in the saddle tell us that Socialism is opposed to religion. Socialism explains to the masses the workings of capitalism and thereby uncovers its ally, "the church."

In modern religion there is very little left of Christianity, except the name. What is being worked off on the people as Christianity is a modified Paganism that Christ so bitterly opposed. And because he opposed the so-called "religion" of his day, Jesus was persecuted and put to death—just as are many who oppose the revamped paganism of today.

Everybody knows that Jesus opposed violence—war. Does the church oppose it? He opposed the robbery and oppression of the weak by the powerful. Does "the church" oppose it? The Bible, which the church holds to be the Word of God, tells us plainly that the taking of rent, interest and profit from a brother is a crime. Does the church teach this? Jesus drove the money-changers—the grafters, bankers and profit mongers—from the temple. Do not these occupy the front pews of the church today—and, in fact, control the altars from the pulpit, just as they control the press?

The religion of any period or people reflects the economic conditions of that time and people. Their mode of getting a living, every human being has within him the spiritual emotion called religion. What these emotions may amount to depends on their development. All people know that there is a mysterious or higher power to whom they owe the debt of existence. Even the savages know this and have their

different religions.

So that you may understand what I mean by religion reflecting the economic conditions of the time, I will explain: The Indian got his living by hunting. He was happiest when he had a hunting ground in which there was plenty of game, and he would die for it if another tribe undertook to get it away from him. Therefore his heaven was a Happy Hunting Ground and his God the Great Spirit that ruled over it.

Under capitalism the Almighty dollar is supreme. Everybody is after the dollar—just as the Indian was after the game. Wealth is the one ideal toward which all of us strive. Gold is the most precious of metals and is the basis of our medium of exchange—money. Therefore the capitalist heaven is to be attractive, is lined with gold, the streets are paved with it, and he who enters will wear a golden crown, and be given a golden harp tuned up for rag-time.

I don't know what would happen to our capitalist heaven if gold should cease to rank high in commercial value and become demoralized as the basis of our money. Then gold would be so cheap and common that there would be no incentive to want to go to the plate heaven.

As for me, the place heaven is not at all attractive. With nothing to do but flutter about and twang a harp—I would give up my life. Music is all right, occasionally. But anybody would be tired of too much of it. Therefore, the streets don't excite me at all. I prefer a grassy lane through a stretch of green woods. And a slouch hat fits my mood better than a stiff golden crown—and I wouldn't discard my old fiddle for any kind of harp.

They will have to rig up some other sort of bait to make me be "good."

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RAILWAYS SCARED UP.

Their Publicity Agents Busy Trying to Prejudice Public Against Men.

The Kicker was in error last week in saying that the railroad employees would make their demands for an eight-hour day this month. I should have said in May.

The railroads are already busy with their campaign of publicity to prejudice the public against the workers. In every state they have publicity agents and press bureaus to furnish "copy" to the newspapermen whose editors travel on "editorial mileage" and the staff appears as original "copy editor."

The misinformation sent out by these railroad press agents is sometimes amusing. While it contains much that is true, yet it is so warped and doctored up as to leave an entirely misleading impression on those not familiar with economic conditions and the facts.

The Kicker receives this publicity-dore weekly. The railroads seem to overlook the fact that I haven't used "editorial mileage" since I launched the Kicker fifteen years ago. Last week I received the press dope from the Frisco office, St. Louis, sent out by L. M. Harris. It contained an extract from an article by Luke Grant in Chamberlain's Magazine.

Luke Grant is described as "Special Agent United States Industrial Relations Commission." That was Luke Grant's title. The railroads and allied interests tried in every way to discredit the report of the Industrial Relations Commission and are now turning heaven and earth to prevent congress from printing this report. Yet they are trying to make the public believe that an agent or representative of that commission is opposed to the demands of the railroad employees.

Luke Grant was an employee of the Industrial Commission, but his pay stopped last July, and that ended his services as a public employee. Now the railroads have captured him and are using him.

The Kicker read the article by Luke Grant and found that it contained a great truth. "The railroads are to the life of the country what the blood arteries are to the human body," says Mr. Grant.

That is true. And I am sorry I have not Mr. Grant here to ask him a question. I would like to ask him how it would suit him to have the blood arteries of his body privately owned by barons and parasites that had no other interest in his body except to rob it of its vitality?

Railroads are to a state what dirt roads are to a community. There is as much reason for the private ownership of one as there is for the other. Country roads used to be privately owned in some sections. But the people have outgrown that. And they are outgrowing the private ownership of the railroads.

The railroads are also circulating a pamphlet by "Luke Grant, Special Agent United States Industrial Commission." When the attention of Chairman Walsh of the Commission was called to it, he said:

"Grant is not an agent of the Industrial Commission and has not been since last July. The Commission, as well known to the

different religions. So that you may understand what I mean by religion reflecting the economic conditions of the time, I will explain: The Indian got his living by hunting. He was happiest when he had a hunting ground in which there was plenty of game, and he would die for it if another tribe undertook to get it away from him. Therefore his heaven was a Happy Hunting Ground and his God the Great Spirit that ruled over it.

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had better cut out their publicity agents and some of their high-salaried lawyers, lobbyist and officials, and give the men what they ask.

A few days ago a Cotton Belt fireman said to me: "I began firing on the Cotton Belt eight years ago. Then the engines pulled 18,000 tons. Now the engines pull 30,000 tons, and as the engines grow larger and more complicated my chances for promotion to engineer grow less. The fireman now feeds an engine that pulls 12,000 tons more than eight years ago and during that time his wages increased only 65 cents per 100 miles."

Hence, while the firemen have nearly doubled the work of eight years ago, yet their increase in pay does not equal the increased cost of living during that period.

Judging from the following dispatch, the workers are as busy in preparing for an active publicity campaign so as to get the side of the controversy before the public:

New York, Feb. 28.—The Labor Center Association of this city has opened its campaign for an eight-hour day.

Minors of striking post-stamps will carry the message to all corners of the country. Every union man and union sympathizer is asked to use these stamps of all his correspondence—to spread his broadcast under the eyes of his fellow workers, employers and the general public.

With 400,000 railway employees threatening to strike under the eight-hour day, and the coal miners doing the same it is evident this campaign will have the greatest publicity in the history of organized labor.

Women's garment workers throughout the country are expected to follow the 60,000 men on strike in New York for shorter working hours.

It is that street-war men will be next to demand a shorter working day, all over the country. Machinists already have an eight-hour day in many localities—especially where large numbers of orders are speeding up the factories—but they will continue the fight wherever their demands are still to be won.

"We aren't planning to wreck American industries," says Hugh Frayne, the American Federation of Labor's New York organizer. "We are trying to make this a campaign of publicity and education."

"But we are going to stick to the fight until the eight-hour day, and one day's rest in seven are universal in this country."

THE DANDY HATTERS

From the Appeal to Reason. It is a rather funny story, the story of the Dandy Hatters. It is more than a pathetic story; it is a dandy story—a story of one law for the rich who do no real work, and another for the poor who do all the necessary work.

It is a story of capitalist tyranny and greed fostered and supported at every turn by those in control of the machinery of government and the courts that should arouse the working class of the nation as never before to a realization of the injustice of one class appropriating all wealth.

The Dandy Hatters who are defied under the Sherman antitrust law, a law that was never intended to apply to trade unions. For thirteen long years this case, with which all newspaper readers are familiar, has dragged through the Federal courts.

Now, lenten by every scandalous, dishonest lawyer and judge who has taken a bribe, a case of one hundred and eighty-nine Dandy Hatters is being tried and the willows and swamps of these courts have been made a mockery of a justice that is to satisfy the judgment of a few men as to what is the most flagrant misrepresentation of justice.

The order for the sale of homes of these workers has been ordered by the federal court. There are a hundred and eighty-eight of them, all old men, most of them over seventy years, none under fifty. "And now," says Lawrence, one of the victims, puts it: "I must pay damages to a man most of it never saw, one of us ever worked for and few of us ever heard of before we were brought into court concerning a matter of which few of us have interest in."

Think of it! A law, designed for no other purpose than to apply to organized capital, twisted wilyly misinterpreted, and used to crush a labor union and its defenseless workers of their life homes!

It is certainly high time that the workers become interested in preparedness—preparedness to defend themselves. And it is high time they realized that the only way they can defend themselves is by an intelligent use of their ballots.

We cannot evade the truth—these hundred and eighty-eight workers, robbed of their homes and made paupers, are the victims of a system that the working class supports and votes for. Workers, you will never understand that your only hope is Socialism.

At last the organized workers seem to realize that the way to get a square deal is to get it. There'll be something doing along about next summer.

IN THE SOUTHEAST.

What the People are Doing in Other Counties that are Near.

THE RECRUITING STATIONS

From the Fredericktown News. The organization of Ball's soldiers now numbers 13, with six or seven candidates. THEY ARE FROM ALL CHURCHES and other

East Prince George. The body of Ernest Thomas, 39, was drowned January 8 was found by Will and Chas. Bankston Friday morning in a swamp about 125 yards from Baker Bayed. The body was in an upright position against a sapling the left arm being thrown over a limb and the right arm around the neck. The head and breast bled where the water when discovered. Thomas was left the home of the Bankstons in a skiff to go to the home of Bill Bankston in a skiff by 2:30 p. m.

A few days ago a body was found floating in the water. Thompson's body was found in the water when discovered. Thomas was left the home of the Bankstons in a skiff to go to the home of Bill Bankston in a skiff by 2:30 p. m.

any attempt to find the body. Then paroled passing up the lake in boats have been looking for the body so that it was seen. It is supposed that Thompson's body was found in the water when discovered. Thomas was left the home of the Bankstons in a skiff to go to the home of Bill Bankston in a skiff by 2:30 p. m.

No doubt left Pittman, 37, a native of a backwoods farmer. He was found in a swamp of law and justice. Several days ago they discovered in a swamp of law and justice. Several days ago they discovered in a swamp of law and justice. Several days ago they discovered in a swamp of law and justice.

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Wm. Hunter, of Benton, the largest landowner in Southeast Missouri, has formed himself into a corporation as the holder of part of his land. The corporation is composed of himself and children, and the land controlled by it is reported at nearly 10,000 acres valued at nearly two million dollars. In addition to this Mr. Hunter owns thousands of acres more. Just what he did to make this land morally "his," I do not know. The land owned by the corporation would provide 476 families with 40-acre homes. But perhaps it is better for the general welfare to have these 476 families homeless. The defenders of the present system argue that way. These 476 families were "shiftless" and "wounded" men. Not so with Mr. Hunter. I have no need to find with him personally. He just happened to understand the game and played it successfully—so we need not complain of property as the exploiters of a species.

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APPLE IS KING!



Kill San Jose Scale, Oyster-Shell, Park Loase, Codling Moth, Plum Curculio, Rose Slugs, Potato Bugs and other dangerous fruit and plant diseases and fungus with

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